

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 (ISO) W

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R 181120Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO USDAO BERN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1573

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2801

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,PINR, AG

SUB: DEATH OF AHMED MEDEGHRI

REF: USDAO BERN 991 (NOTAL)

1. IN ABSENCE OF AUTHORITATIVE REPORT FROM MEDICAL COMMISSION APPOINTED TO EXAMINE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MEDEGHRI DEATH, WIDE VARIETY OF SPECULATIVE STORIES ARE STILL CIRCULATING. THEY INCLUDE POISONING, SUICIDE AND ASSASSINATION BY FIRST WIFE, SECOND WIFE OR UNIDENTIFIED POLITICAL OPPOSITION. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT DEATH WAS CAUSED BY LARGE DOSE OF PAIN-KILLING DRUGS WHICH MEDEGHRI APPARENTLY ADMINISTERED TO HIMSELF UPON RETURNING FROM CABINET MEETING MORNING DECEMBER 10, AND THAT NO FOUL PLAY WAS INVOLVED.

2. AT NO TIME DURING IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF DEATH OR FUNERAL CEREMONIES, WHICH WERE ATTENDED BY ALL HIGH RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WERE EXTRA SECURITY PRECAUTIONS IN EVIDENCE. SO FAR AS WE AWARE, COUNTRY HAS REMAINED COMPLETELY CALM. FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA HAS NOT

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RETURNED TO NEW YORK, AN ADDITIONAL SIGN OF NORMALCY,

AND CABINET HAS RESUMED MEETINGS ON 1975. BUDGET.

3. HOCINE TAYEBI, SEC GEN OF MININTERIOR, IS ACTING HEAD OF MINISTRY. HE IS CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR WHO RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TRIP TO GUINEA-BISSAU WHERE HE WAS HELPING ORGANIZE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF NEW GUINEA-BISSAU GOVERNMENT.

4. ONE RESULT OF DEATH IS THAT LOCAL MEDIA HAVE BEGUN PUBLISHING PHOTOS AND NAME OF MINISTER OF STATE CHERIF BELKACEM, WHO HAS NOT BEEN WORKING MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT FOR PAST SIX MONTHS. WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT IN GESTURE OF SOLIDARITY FOLLOWING MEDEGHRI DEATH, BOUMEDIENE AND BALKACEM HAVE PATCHED UP DIFFERENCES AND BELKACEM WILL SOON RESUME HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.

5. ALGIERS 2767 BEING REPEATED USDAO BERN FOR INFO. DO NOT BELIEVE FURTHER QUESTIONING OF GOUDJIL IS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME. BARR

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